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ABSTRACT

The "Speak for Yourself" curriculum is one element of the Lutheran Brotherhood's "Respecteen" national youth initiative. Designed for seventh and eighth grade students, this program encourages students to develop an awareness of contemporary social issues, inspire communication about those issues among students and their families, and encourage student participation in the U.S. political process. Six lessons are given which state student objectives, give a brief description of the topic area, include a main activity handout, and list optional activities. These lessons concern: (1) the U.S. legislative process, (2) how lobbying influences Congress, (3) an identification of youth issues, (4) recognizing youth as a special interest group, (5) writing to Congress, and (6) extending the excitement. The writing to Congress activity is a competition that enables the winners, one from each state, to participate in the 4-day National Youth Forum conference held in June in Washington, DC. (PPB)

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SPEAK FOR YOURSELF 2

RESPECTEEN
Helping Parents and Teens Respect Each Other—and Themselves

Introduction

Speak for Yourself is an educational program for social studies, history, and government students in grades 7-8. The objectives of the program are:

- to encourage students to identify, reflect upon, and act upon issues affecting their lives;
- to foster communication about youth issues within students' families;
- to help students understand how government introduces and passes laws and makes policy decisions; and
- to encourage students to participate actively in, and provide input into, the American political process.

Speak for Yourself concludes with each student's writing a letter to his or her U.S. representative about a youth issue, suggesting an approach or solution.

The letter-writing activity can provide an opportunity for your students to participate in the National Youth Forum in Washington, D.C., all expenses paid. (See contest description on the back of this file folder.)

Students who enter letters in the contest will receive membership cards stating that they are members of the National Youth for Youth Coalition. A Youth Forum finalist will be chosen in each of the nation's 435 congressional districts. Finalists will receive personalized certificates honoring their achievement. U.S. representatives will be made aware of the winners in their districts and will be encouraged to offer personal congratulations.

One student from each state will be chosen from among the finalists to participate in the National Youth Forum in Washington, D.C., in June. Each of the fifty students will be flown to Washington, with a parent or guardian, for the four-day conference.

Teachers of participating classes will be entered in a drawing for five all-expenses-paid, four-day trips for two people to Washington, D.C. The winning teachers will be invited to participate in the Youth Forum, or if they prefer, to pursue other interests while in Washington.

At the National Youth Forum, the young people will experience politics and lobbying in action. Working together, youth at the Forum will:

- examine what young people need to meet the challenges of adolescence and what role the family, government, and business can take in preparing our youth;
- learn about the process of developing federal public policy and what legislation can and cannot achieve in addressing youth issues; and
- voice their ideas for a national youth agenda to help guide federal policy.

Current plans include having a delegation from the Forum present their views at a congressional hearing.

This program, then, not only teaches students how our democratic government works; the lessons actually involve them in the process at the grass-roots level. The program also provides a range of cross-curricular activities, elicits whole-family examination of teen problems, and introduces students to citizen responsibilities.

Speak for Yourself is one element of a program called **RESPECTEEN: Helping Parents and Teens Respect Each Other and Themselves. RESPECTEEN** is a national program aimed at helping teenagers and parents recognize and surmount the challenges of adolescence. Phone 1-800-888-3820 for information on the **RESPECTEEN** program and how the program can help in your community.

The impetus for **RESPECTEEN** and *Speak for Yourself* is a growing concern about the declining well-being of American adolescents. Two points regarding our young people are clear. First, their lives have become more complex. As new issues arise, we need new approaches to address those issues. Second, these young people represent the future of our nation. Rick R. Little, chairman of Quest International, expressed the need to cope with teen problems:

> The reality is simply this: what we're doing isn't enough, and much of it isn't working. Unless some fundamental ideas and policies are changed, we stand little hope of creating a truly better world for our children. We can no longer afford to view youth as a stage we tolerate until they grow up. Their world is so intertwined with our future, we *must* center our attention on the environments where youth are impacted most: where they live, learn and work. (testimony to Platform Committee, Republican National Convention, 1988)

Other analysts agree. Peter Uhlenberg and David Eggebeen examined youth problems in a recent article with the same conclusions ("The Declining Well-Being of American Adolescents," *The Public Interest* [Winter, 1986], pp. 25-38). Their charts and tables show that between 1960 and 1980 there was: a marked decline in family poverty; a smaller family size; an increase in

education among parents; an increase in per-pupil expenditure in our schools; an increase in education among teachers; and a smaller average class size in secondary schools. The major indicators, that is, are up—a credit to our society's commitment to its youth. Yet the results are heartrendingly negative. During the same period, academic performance worsened. Delinquency rates more than doubled (from 20.1% to 46.4%). Teenage pregnancy and teenage abortion rose dramatically, as did alcohol and drug use among teens. (Of all industrialized nations, we have the highest level of teen drug use.) Deaths among teens, from auto accidents, homicide, and suicide, were higher than ever before.

These problems are mirrored everywhere. The new *Social Issues Resources Series* devotes a whole volume to youth. Its pages are filled with reports about runaway kids, teen suicide pacts, gang violence, school dropouts (about 30% of kids now fail to graduate), the fragmented family, peer and parental pressure, and other trends which riddle teens' world with fear and loss.

Analysis of reasons and suggestions for solutions are varied. Some blame the images of violence, the shallow values, and the passivity engendered by TV. Some cite the shattered family unit and the loosened bonds between parent and child. Some point to poorly administered and underfunded government programs. What is clear is that we must begin to search for causes and solutions, and we must make the search a national priority.

Involving students in this search and in the legislative process that rules them is good social studies. It can help students form their own opinions and learn to become contributors and leaders in society.

Lesson 1:

The American Legislative Process

Objectives:

Students will complete sentences to correctly explain the roles of members of Congress, congressional committees, and the president in the legislative process.

Students will identify their district's U.S. representative and their state's U.S. senators.

Students will chart the steps by which a bill becomes federal law in the United States.

Begin by clarifying for your students how issues are transformed into policies and laws – how a congressperson's proposed solution to a problem, expressed in a bill, can be studied, debated, revised, and enacted by Congress. Congress' powers and responsibilities arise not only from the Constitution but from two centuries of precedents. Its major power is to make the laws of the land. Congress must also ensure that public policies are lawfully and effectively administered. Finally, members of Congress must represent their constituencies. Congress provides a voice for the people back home in their districts and states.

Woodrow Wilson wrote that "Congress in committee is Congress at work." Indeed, most of the legislative work of Congress is accomplished in its committees and subcommittees. The committee system arose as the House and Senate found their tasks too complex and numerous for effective floor action.

Today, when a U.S. representative or senator introduces a bill, it is referred to a standing committee, a permanent committee whose major function is to prepare and consider legislation. Both the House and Senate have committees concerned with agriculture, defense, housing, commerce, science and technology, education, government operations, international relations, judiciary affairs, and service veterans.

Committee work is further subdivided so that investigative and reporting work can be done in more specialized subcommittees. In the House, bills are often examined by several subcommittees. The subcommittee reviews a bill and might hold hearings and seek expert testimony on subjects addressed in the bill. The subcommittee then returns the bill, with its recommendations, to the standing committee. If the standing committee decides to place the bill on the agenda for floor action before the entire House or Senate, these recommendations are likely to be reported to the full assembly of members. During floor debate, any member of the House or Senate may offer an amendment to the bill. When debate is concluded, and when amendments have been voted on, members may vote on the bill in its final form.

A bill passed by a majority of members in either the House or Senate is sent to be debated, amended, and voted upon by the other house of Congress. Through this process, the House and Senate may produce different versions of a bill. These differences can be ironed out through joint conference committees including members of both chambers. If no agreement is reached in the conference committee, the legislation fails. Agreements must be approved by both houses.

Bills approved by both houses are sent to the president to be signed into law. If the president vetoes a bill, that is, sends it back to Congress with his objections, the bill may still become law. To enact the bill, Congress must override the president's veto with a two-thirds majority in both houses.

Test your students' comprehension of the legislative process by having them complete Activity 1. You may also wish to assign one or more of the following optional activities.

- Have students use their social studies text and/or an encyclopedia to answer the following questions for classmates.
  - What concerns and compromises led to the establishment of our bicameral (two-house) legislature?
  - How do the two houses of Congress differ in size, terms of office of members, and powers?
  - How does the system of checks and balances among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches affect our laws?
  - How do political parties and their leadership structure in Congress affect the passage of legislation?
- Invite a congressperson or congressional staffer to speak to your class. Ask your visitor to describe a particular piece of legislation, how it was initiated, how it fared in committee and floor debate, whether it became law, and what its effects are likely to be.

Lesson 2:

Lobbying Influences Congress

Objectives:

Students will complete sentences to define the roles and objectives of congressional lobbyists.

Students will explain the advantages and disadvantages of allowing lobbyists to attempt to influence members of Congress.

Lobbying is trying to influence the way legislators vote. Lobbyists represent special interest groups (that is, groups of people who share certain characteristics or objectives) who wish to affect legislation. Many of these special interest groups are supported by financial contributions from their members. Special interest groups might include Blacks, women, farmers, businessmen, labor, or nuclear disarmament protesters.

Specific examples of professional lobbying abound. For example, the trucking industry spent $3 million in 1979 to fight deregulation, which could have increased competition, making it difficult for small trucking companies to survive. Moreover, some lobbying groups may work against each other. Business and right-to-work groups, for example, may spend millions of dollars fighting pro-labor legislation, while unions spend large sums for better organizing rights.

Lobbyists and special interest groups may also have manpower. Professional, or paid, lobbyists are required to register with the secretary of the Senate, and in 1987 over 23,000 did. Many more unpaid lobbyists and special interest groups also devote substantial resources to getting legislation initiated or defeated.

Lobbyists and special interest groups know that the real power over lawmakers lies among their constituents. Therefore, lobbyists spend money and effort trying to convince ordinary people across America that a certain cause or solution is right. Tools to mobilize support include direct mail, media spots, and speakers.

Grass-roots efforts have been especially visible in the last twenty years. The citizen protests of the 1960s in particular forced lawmakers to pay attention to the compelling needs and views of people back home. Blacks, women, Vietnam protesters and many others had an indelible impact on Congress and on the nation. Today, as Hedrick Smith notes, "lobbyists must demonstrate that the home folks

are with them to prove their political legitimacy." Any lobbyist, even a citizen group, must be able to show the support of the voters.

Lobbyists are helpful to lawmakers in representing the voices of specific segments of citizens. Moreover, lobbyists can often offer needed or specialized information. The Cotton Council may have more and clearer data than any other source when a subcommittee is drafting legislation on cotton for the cotton industry. The trucking industry lobby may argue for laws which help truckers, small and large, survive financially. The voices of these lobbyists are the voices of self-interest; but together they reflect the desires of many segments of Americans. Representative democracy is alive and well in the United States.

Have your students complete Activity 2. In addition, you may wish to involve them in one of the following optional activities.

- Have students identify the representatives of special interest groups juxtaposed on the poster enclosed with this program. Ask students if they, like women, Blacks, and labor, belong to a special interest group.
- Divide students into groups to report on the long-term efforts of some large grass-roots special interest groups: Blacks, women, pro-union workers, Vietnam protesters, farmers, and nuclear disarmament proponents. Challenge students to use encyclopedias and other sources to discover the objectives of the group, the opposition it has met, the methods it has used to overcome opposition, and the success it has achieved.
- Have students examine recent issues of newspapers and magazines, as well as tune in to radio and television broadcasts, to determine what local and national issues are currently attracting attention and debate. Encourage students to find out who is for and who is against proposed solutions. Ask students to clip relevant newspaper stories, editorials, and letters to the editor—and to write down pertinent information from radio and television.
- Invite a guest speaker from a special interest group, a media source, or local government to explain how a special interest group, local or national, championed an issue, whether to victory or defeat.

Lesson 3:

Identifying Youth Issues

Objectives:

Students will list and discuss issues affecting youth.

Students will interview parents and list youth issues from parents' viewpoints.

Begin by providing students with Activity 3. With as little guidance as possible, encourage your students to identify problems affecting their well-being and future prospects. As issues are suggested, list them on the chalkboard. Ask students to evaluate each issue, deleting those of marginal importance, and zeroing in on key problems. As issues emerge, have students list them in the left-hand column of their activity sheets. During discussion, be cautious not to affect students' input.

You may wish to construct on the chalkboard a chart with the following headings: PROBLEM; HOW IT AFFECTS TEENS; CHANGE DESIRED; HOW CHANGE CAN BE EFFECTED. Class discussion stimulated by the chart may not at this point elicit informed opinions or solutions; but the chart will suggest approaches for thinking and writing. Help students recognize the complexity of the issues they raise, the conflicting forces at work behind many of them, and the multiple groups to be enlisted in any comprehensive solution of them. Point out, for example, that drug abuse can be fought with tough law enforcement, but is also influenced by peer pressure and, in many cases, emotional needs arising from family problems. Suggest, as well, that many youth problems cannot be remedied by government action. Some issues may need to be resolved within the family unit or the community.

You may wish to have students role-play elected officials and representatives of special interest groups. Encourage students acting as special interest groups to lobby officials for legislation or policy-making that meets the needs of the groups they speak for. Encourage students acting as officials to weigh these requests with the good of other special interest groups as well as the good of the constituency as a whole.

Assign students to take Activity 3 home and ask parents to identify the major issues affecting youth. Caution students not to prompt parents or reveal what issues are in the student-generated list. Ask students to write parents' lists in the right-hand column of the activity sheet and to bring the sheet to the next class.

Lesson 4:

Recognizing Youth as a Special Interest Group

Objectives:

Students will recognize that, as youth, they are part of a special interest group.

Students will use library resources, current news reports, interviews, and other methods to research youth issues.

Students will reach informed opinions on youth issues.

Students will discuss youth issues with parents.

Guide students to compare the class-generated list of youth issues with the parent-generated lists. Help students analyze the similarities or dissimilarities. If the lists differ substantially, students might conclude that adults have a different perspective on youth problems than they themselves do. If this is the case in your class, emphasize to students the importance of studying issues and exploring solutions themselves instead of letting others speak for them. Point out that young people are a special interest group, with unique needs and views. Note that every citizen has the responsibility to participate in government, raising issues and seeking answers.

Point out, as well, that the disparity between parent and student points of view may be the result of a lack of communication. Encourage your students to discuss the two lists with their parents. Suggest that students explain to parents the logic behind the student list, while probing for the logic behind the parent list.

Try having your students examine from different points of view a particular problem affecting teens. Have students consider, for example, how different groups could each help resolve the problem—parents, teens, community groups, business, the government. Ask students to consider how many solutions or contributions could come from sources outside the government.

Ask each of your students to choose a youth issue for further reading and thought. When students have selected their topics, assign them to research their topics further at the library. You may wish to arrange a tour of the library to enhance your class' research skills. Make sure your students understand how to use the most important research resources: the card catalog, encyclopedias, almanacs, periodicals, periodical indexes, and the reference librarian. Encourage students to consider using interviews and current news reports (television, radio, and newspapers), too. Through this research, each student should reach an informed opinion on a topic.

Activity 4 serves as a guide, checklist, and working bibliography for students. Each student should complete the sheet while taking notes on additional sheets of paper or notecards.

Finally, students should formulate an outline that reflects a reasoned or argued point of view. The outline should suggest an action to help resolve a problem affecting youth, and should explain why the action will be helpful. In format, the outline should be headed with a thesis statement that is a sentence. ("Laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to minors should be strictly enforced." or "Communities should set up special programs to help teens cope with peer pressure.") Supporting arguments and facts should follow, also expressed as complete sentences. You may wish to plan to have students present their points of view to classmates, using their outlines as speaking notes.

You may wish to point out, too, that not all outlines need urge legislative action. If a student writer believes that government cannot remedy a problem, he or she may suggest other actions the government might take, such as a representative's speaking and writing to non-government people who have the power to solve the problem.

Lesson 5:

Writing to Congress

Objectives:

Students will express informed opinions about youth issues.

Each student will write a letter to his or her U.S. representative, urging specific action on a youth problem.

Ask students to review the sample letter in Activity 5, and answer the questions following the letter. Point out that answers to questions 1 and 2 make up a sentence outline of the letter. After this outlining practice, encourage students to tighten and clarify the organization of their own outlines.

Have students use their revised outlines and the sample letter to write their own letters to their U.S. representatives. Remind students that the sample letter is only a guide. Their letters should contain their own opinions and should reflect their own research.

Send the students' original letters to appropriate U.S. representatives. Send copies of the students' letters, with completed entry forms and the contest card, to the address indicated in the contest rules on the back of this file folder. Contest prizes offer opportunities for young people and parents to work more closely with elected officials in forming government policy.

Help your students recognize that they are now grass-roots lobbyists, and that they are informing and affecting lawmaking. Encourage them to make the experience a pattern for the future. Help students take pride in their letters. You may wish to display copies of them in a lobby or other central area of your school.

You may want to include parents in the letter-writing experience by inviting them to an open house or meeting at which they can examine their young people's letters. Allow time for parents and students to discuss the issues raised in the letters.

Lesson 6:

Extending the Excitement

Objective:

Students will participate in lobbying activities to inform elected officials and gather support for their views.

You can add more of the flavor of grass-roots lobbying to this program through the following additional activities.

- Have students write letters to the editors of local newspapers, expressing their views and urging readers to support them with specific action.
- Invite a local reporter to do a feature article on the students' views and how students are making their voices heard through this program.
- Allow students to make speeches and circulate petitions to mobilize a constituency in support of their positions.
- Organize a youth convention at your school for the purpose of drafting a local, state, and/or national youth policy to guide the government as it writes laws and sets up programs for teens. Arrange for students to present the policy to local, state, and federal lawmakers.

Conclusion

By involving your students in this educational program, you have increased their understanding of government and improved their prospects for responsible, effective citizenship. You have also been instrumental in bringing youth problems to the attention of elected officials.

Lutheran Brotherhood is proud to sponsor this program, and would like to know about its effectiveness in your class. Please take time to complete the evaluation form in this package. We would like to read your comments and gain insight into your students' response to the materials. We look forward to hearing from you.

For Further Reading

Caplan, Marc. *Ralph Nader Presents a Citizens' Guide to Lobbying.* New York: Dembner Books, 1983.

Chronicle of the 20th Century. Ed. Clifton Daniel. Mount Kisko, New York: Chronicle Publications, 1987.

Congressional Quarterly Guide to Current American Government. Published twice yearly by Congressional Quarterly, Inc.

Electronic Learning special supplement: "The Literacy Challenge " (January/February, 1989).

Little, Rick R. Testimony presented to Temporary Committee on Resolution, Republican National Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, May 31, 1988.

Smith, Hedrick. *The Power Game: How Washington Works.* New York: Random House, 1988.

Social Issues Resources Series. Ed. Eleanor Goldstein. Boca Raton: Social Issues Resources Series, Inc., 1988.

The American Legislative Process

I. Match each phrase in the left-hand column with a phrase in the right-hand column to form correct sentences.

1. Congress' powers and responsibilities arise from	by committees and subcommittees.
2. Congress' major power is making	members of the House and Senate.
3. Most of Congress' legislative work is accomplished	the Constitution.
	the laws of the land.
4. Bills are introduced by	make recommendations regarding bills.
5. Committees and subcommittees	is studied by committees and debated by members of the House and Senate.
6. On its way to becoming a law, a bill	when a majority of members vote for it.
7. A bill is passed	he refuses to sign it into law.
8. After both houses of Congress pass a bill	it is sent to the president.
9. When the president vetoes a bill	pass the bill with a two-thirds majority in both houses.
10. To override a veto, Congress must	

II. Answer the following questions.

1. My U.S. representative is _____

2. My state's U.S. senators are _____

and _____

III. On the back of this sheet, draw a map or flow chart to show the steps a bill passes through on the way to becoming a law.

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RESPECTEEN
Helping Parents and Teens Respect Each Other—and Themselves

Activity 2:

Lobbying Influences Congress

I. Use the words in the box to complete the sentences correctly.

lobby	23,000	constituents	special interest groups
represent	information	The Cotton Council	

1. Individuals _____ when they seek to influence how members of Congress vote.
2. _____ such as labor unions and trade associations often lobby Congress.
3. Lobbyists can provide _____ to lawmakers.
4. Special interest lobbyists may _____ the views of many segments of American voters.
5. Elected officials are concerned with the needs of _____ in home districts and states.
6. _____ is a special interest group.
7. In 1987, there were over _____ professional lobbyists registered with the secretary of the Senate.

II. On the back of this sheet, write a paragraph explaining what you believe are the advantages and disadvantages of allowing special interest groups to attempt to influence lawmakers' votes.

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RESPECTEEN
Helping Parents and Teens Respect Each Other—and Themselves

Activity 3:

Identifying Youth Issues

Youth Issues Listed by my Class	Youth Issues Listed by my Parents

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Activity 4:

Researching a Youth Issue

I. Complete the following sentences to clarify your research process.

1. The issue I am studying is _____

2. Key words or topics I used to find information in indexes and other sources are _____

3. The indexes, catalogs, and other reference material I used to locate sources were _____

4. I conducted interviews with _____

5. From news reports (television, radio, or newspaper), I learned _____

6. The sources that were most helpful were _____

7. Important facts or ideas I discovered were _____

8. My position on the issue can be summarized as follows _____

II. Use the back of this sheet to write an outline showing your major conclusions about the issue. State your position as a thesis at the top of the outline. Follow with a numbered, organized list of arguments supporting your thesis.

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Activity 5

Writing to Congress

I. Read the sample letter below.

355 Liberty Lane
Democracy, Ohio 45388
April 15, 1989

U.S Representative Michael DeWine
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative DeWine:

Please consider working with other members of Congress to increase federal funding for anti-drug education. The drug problem in our nation's high schools is becoming very serious.

A few weeks ago, a student in my class was hospitalized because of a drug overdose. He lay in a coma for days. I believe education can help keep this from happening to other young people.

It is difficult to find facts about drug use. In 1985, however, the University of Michigan surveyed high school seniors to discover how many of them had used illegal drugs. Of the 16,000 who answered, 30% said they had.

In large city schools, drug use may be much worse. Through my research, I learned that some kids in these schools say that 80% of their classmates use drugs. Others tell about $100-a-day habits and the crime that supports them. Some kids say parents and teachers don't care.

I have learned from my reading that drug problems may be a symptom of larger problems, like family problems, low self-esteem, or peer pressure. Perhaps educational programs should include these larger problems. Also, educational programs might be most helpful if they were for parents as well as kids.

Our government is spending a lot of money trying to keep drugs out of our country. President Bush has promised he will spend more money helping kids learn to stay away from drugs. I urge you to study this issue. I hope you will use your findings to pass laws for anti-drug education.

Sincerely,

Janice Eljis

Janice Eljis

II. Notice the structure of the letter. Label its parts with the terms below.

heading inside address greeting body closing signature

III. Write the answers to the following questions on the back of this sheet.

1. Identify the main point of the letter. Write it as a thesis, in a complete sentence.
2. Look for the supporting points or arguments in the letter. They are the reasons the writer gives for her position. Write them as sentences below the thesis.
3. The writer ends with a call to action. What does she want the representative to do?
4. Notice that the writer uses both her personal experience and her reading to make her argument. Is that effective here? Explain your answer.

IV. As you write your letter, remember that your ideas and your recommendations will probably be different from those in the letter above. Your letter will reflect your choice of an issue (perhaps different from Janice Eljis'), your research, your conclusions, and your outline. Make your letter your unique statement.

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SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

Contest Entry Form

Provide the required information below, and staple or tape this entry form securely to a copy of the letter you wrote to your U.S. representative.

NAME _____

AGE _____ GRADE LEVEL _____ COURSE _____

NAME(S) OF PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE (____) _____

TEACHER'S NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SCHOOL PHONE (____) _____

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT _____

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE _____

ISSUE DISCUSSED IN YOUR LETTER _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

RESPECTEEN
Helping Parents and Teens Respect Each Other—and Themselves

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Letter-Writing Contest

Lutheran Brotherhood is pleased to sponsor a letter-writing contest for students in grades 7-8 who participate in the *Speak for Yourself* educational program. The contest is meant to encourage students' examination of youth issues and their participation in the democratic process. Through writing a letter to a U.S. representative, each student will have the opportunity to express concerns and suggestions regarding legislation or other government action to benefit young people.

How to Enter

1. To enter, each student should write a letter to his or her U.S. representative, discussing an issue affecting young people and suggesting a solution.
2. The letter should be between 150 and 300 words in length. It must follow the standard letter format of the sample letter in Activity 5 of this program.
3. Letters should be typed or neatly handwritten in ink or ball-point pen on 8 1/2" x 11" sheets of lined or unlined white paper. Charts or graphs may be included in letters, but no illustrated or three-dimensional entries can be accepted.
4. Each entrant must complete the contest entry form included with this program, and attach it to his or her entry.
5. Original letters must be sent to the entrants' U.S. representative. Entry forms and copies of letters must be sent in class packages to:
   Speak for Yourself Letter-Writing Contest
   P.O. Box 242
   Wilberforce, Ohio 45384
6. Each package of entries should contain a correctly completed contest card (see lower portion of teacher's evaluation form).
7. Deadline for entry is May 5, 1989.

Eligibility

1. All full-time students enrolled in grades 7-8 for the 1988-89 school year are eligible to compete for prizes.
2. Family members of employees or agents of Lutheran Brotherhood or Padilla Speer Beardsley are not eligible to enter.
3. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state, and local laws apply.
4. No entries can be returned. All entries become property of Lutheran Brotherhood. Entry in contest will be deemed consent for use of entry and name and picture of entrant in Lutheran Brotherhood promotional materials.
5. Taxes on prizes are the responsibility of winners and their families.

Prizes

1. All entrants become members of the National Youth for Youth Coalition, and will receive membership cards.
2. At congressional district level:
   Judges will select a finalist from each congressional district. Each finalist will receive a certificate and, pending consent of the representative, will receive personal congratulations from his or her U.S. representative.
3. At the state level:
   From among the finalists, judges will select a winner from each state. Each winner will become a National Youth Forum State Representative. Along with one parent or guardian, each State Representative will receive a four-day trip to Washington, D.C., including airline tickets, food, and lodging. Student winners and attending parents/guardians will participate in the National Youth Forum in June, 1989.
4. Teachers of participating classes will be entered in a drawing for five all-expenses-paid, four-day trips, including airline tickets, food, and lodging, for two people to Washington, D.C.

Judging

1. Entries will be judged on quality and clarity of thought, argument, supporting data, and expression, as well as sincerity and originality. Entries that are not legible will be disqualified. All entries must be in English.
2. All decisions of the judges will be final.
3. Winners will be notified no later than May 26, 1989.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF
Evaluation Form

(Detach, fold, and mail)

Dear Educator:

We value your opinion and would like to have your comments regarding the effectiveness of this educational program. Please take a moment to answer the questions below and return this card to us.

1. With what class and grade level did you use these materials? _____

   _____

2. How many students participated in this program? _____

3. This program (choose one): ☐ was extremely helpful ☐ was helpful
   ☐ could have been more helpful.

4. Student response was: ☐ very positive ☐ positive ☐ unenthusiastic.

5. The information presented was: ☐ too difficult ☐ about right ☐ too easy

6. The program fit into the curriculum: ☐ very easily ☐ fairly easily ☐ not easily

7. After working through the activities, students were better informed about how government works:
   ☐ yes ☐ no.

8. After working through the activities, students were better informed about youth issues:
   ☐ yes ☐ no.

9. Did you find the program a worthwhile learning experience?
   ☐ yes ☐ no.

10. Would you recommend this program to other teachers? ☐ yes ☐ no

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Detach Here

Contest Card

(To be completed by teacher and enclosed with contest entries)

Grade entering contest: _____

Number of students writing letters, even if not all were submitted. _____

Did the contest enhance students' appreciation of the *Speak for Yourself* program? _____

Why? _____

_____

Please add any other comments about the *Speak for Yourself* contest here: _____

_____

_____

_____

Please complete the reverse side of this card.

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Tape or staple here

Fold here

_____

_____

_____

Speak for Yourself Evaluation
P.O. Box 242
Wilberforce, Ohio 45384

NAME _____

POSITION _____

SCHOOL _____ COUNTY _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

RESPECTEEN Helping Parents and Teens Respect Each Other–and Themselves

NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM FACT SHEET

Lutheran Brotherhood's national youth initiative, RESPECTEEN, includes four primary components: 1) a comunity needs assessment program; 2) school curricula providing "life skills" for children, teenagers and parents; 3) a public information program; and 4) the National Youth Forum.

NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM: The Mission

The National Youth Forum has been established to identify and address key issues among our nation's teens and their parents. Its goal is to help generate national awareness of what our teens and parents need to meet adolescent challenges.

Because teens cannot vote, they traditionally have had little voice in policymaking that affects them. Indeed, some have called young teens "the lost group" since most public policy directed at them focuses narrowly on specific symptoms, like gangs or drug abuse.

The National Youth Forum will instead speak to some of the more complex root problems responsible for many of the difficulties youth face today.

The National Youth Forum provides an opportunity for youth to speak out. It fosters cooperation among parents, young teens, schools, members of congress and business to provide an environment through which teenagers can develop tools they need to effectively make the tough choices that will impact the rest of their lives.

The Program

- In March a curriculum program called "Speak For Yourself" will be distributed to seventh and eighth grade social studies teachers nationwide focusing on three areas:

  1. Examining what teens need to meet adolescent challenges and what role the family, government and business can take in preparing our youth;

  2. Teaching teens about the process of developing federal public policy and what legislation can and cannot achieve in addressing youth issues; and

  3. Enabling teens to voice their ideas for dealing with youth related issues by writing letters to their U.S. House Representatives.

- Lutheran Brotherhood will receive copies of the students' letters sent to their representatives. A panel of experts will select a finalist from each congressional district. From among the finalists, a Youth Representative from each state will be chosen to participate in the National Youth Forum.

- In May, all U.S. House Representatives will be informed of the finalists and Youth Forum State Representatives from their districts. Background information on the youth and a certificate for presentation will be provided to each Representative. In addition, Senators from each state will be informed of the finalists and Youth Forum Representatives in their states.

- In June, Youth Forum State Representatives, each accompanied by one parent or guardian, will gather in Washington, D.C. to discuss youth issues and national youth policy, culminating with their testifying at a congressional hearing.

- Several opportunities exist to increase public awareness of the issues facing youth through the National Youth Forum:

  - Publicity surrounding the introduction of the National Youth Forum.

  - Publicity on the selection of the finalists and the State's Youth Representatives.

  - Media coverage of the National Youth Forum, including: a welcoming reception; Youth Forum discussion sessions; students testifying before Congress; and photos of members of congress with their youth representatives on the Capitol steps. Lutheran Brotherhood will send publicity releases to national media and local media in the finalists' hometowns.

D639/18

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